

Integral Faith

"Homily helps and liturgy resources highlighting care for our common home."



Homily Resources and Petitions for the 4th Sunday of Lent, Cycle B (11 March 2018)

Homily Helps

† Scripture passages to note:

2nd Book of Chronicles 36: Early and often did the LORD, the God of their fathers, send his messengers to them, for he had compassion on his people and his dwelling place... Whoever, therefore, among you belongs to any part of his people, let him go up, and may his God be with him.

Eph 2: God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ-by grace you have been saved... For we are his handiwork, created, in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them.

JN 3: For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him... But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

† Passages from *Laudato Si'* to note:

The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know things can change. The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. (#13)

Nobody is suggesting a return to the Stone Age, but we do need to slow down and look at reality in a different way...to recover the values and great goals swept away by our unrestrained delusions of grandeur. (#114)

Once the human being declares independence from reality and behaves with absolute dominion, the very foundations of our life begin to crumble, for “instead of carrying out his role as a cooperator with God in the work of creation, man sets himself up in place of God and thus ends up provoking a rebellion on the part of nature.” (#117)

So what they all need is an “ecological conversion,” whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience. (#217)

Homily Helps (cont.)

† Comment for the day:

Today's scripture focuses on God's grace and mercy. In our reading from Chronicles Cyrus liberates the Judeans as part of a power struggle among kingdoms in the Middle East. In doing so he becomes God's means of freeing the Judeans from captivity and bringing them home despite their infidelity.

St. Paul, writing to the Church at Ephesus, praises God's love and mercy in raising us up from death-dealing ways of living to participation in Christ's resurrection in the here-and-now. Through our baptism we have not only been created anew, we have also been given work to do. We are to be witnesses to God's love and grace for and in the world. This Christian vocation is so vital that we are not just to do it; we are to live in it. This invitation to new life is open to anyone who believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God come to be with us. This new life is a gift given, not because we deserve it, but because God loves us. There is no requirement to belong to a certain ethnic or social group to receive it.

Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night. This is John's way of symbolizing that he was not living in the light of faith. He regards Jesus as a teacher and does not really see who Jesus truly is. Jesus speaks of the time in the desert when the Israelites complained against God and Moses. As a result they were bitten by snakes. Moses put a brass snake on a pole so that the Israelites who had been bitten might look at/see it and be cured. This is Jesus' way of saying that he would be lifted up on a cross for all to see. This will come about because of the great love which his father has for humanity. Jesus has come into the world as a sign of God's great love. And his crucifixion shows just how boundless God's love and mercy are. And this love and mercy is available to anyone, regardless of their race or ethnicity, who believes in the light that is Jesus. As Christians our work is to witness to God's love and mercy to the world. Indeed the world, all creation is the result of God's love embodied by Christ.

Pope Francis stresses the necessity of awareness of God as the loving and merciful creator of all life. Part of the work of witnessing to God's love and care for all living things is treating our beautiful earth as a precious gift from our Creator. Just as the Israelites were healed when they gazed upon the brass serpent, we can be healed by looking for signs of God's love in nature, in people, in society and working for healing in all these areas, especially for lands and peoples devastated by climate change.

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That we might live out our Christian vocation to witness to God's love and mercy by caring for the poor, especially those displaced by climate change, let us pray to the Lord...

Option 2: That our observance of Lent might open our eyes to the love and mercy of God and open our hearts to the importance of our role of protectors of God's handwork, creation, let us pray to the Lord...

Further Resources

Feedback: Info@CatholicClimateCovenant.org

Webpage: www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/english-homily-help

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